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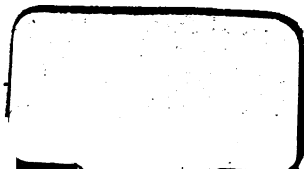
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PHOTOGRAPHS OF
CLOUD & SUNBEAM
IN ENGLAND & ITALY
BY ST. CLAIR BADDELEY

.KE 2269



To Col Wentworth Higginson
at Castle Hall, Farniswick.
C. P. Gros:

from S. Fair Baddeley.
Helen.

**AUTOGRAPHS OF
CLOUD AND SUNBEAM
IN ENGLAND AND ITALY**

AUTOGRAPHS OF
CLOUD AND SUNBEAM
IN ENGLAND AND ITALY



BY
ST. CLAIR BADDELEY

AUTHOR OF "ROBERT THE WISE," ETC.

PRIVATELY PRINTED
AT THE BALLANTYNE PRESS

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TO
FRANCIS ADAMS HYETT, Esq.

DEDICATION

Go, find His friendly hand, seek his kind eyes
Who loves the lanes and woodlands where ye sprang
Among the western emerald hills which rise
Above where Severn flows, that Spenser sang,—
Strange flowers! Through past year's leaves and broken
sprays
Of this year's foliage, straight of stem and bright
Of petal, Ye have heard the wild-wood lays,
And through deep shades have won your way to light.
Then, having found Him, and yourselves enshrined,
Like his own dear ones, round Him, bid him bear
Awhile with ye ; and, lest he seem too kind,
Bid him go forth his doors, and he will hear
How even in his own woods the humblest bird
Can shame the music of my happiest word !

SONNET

LIKE some fair Lady waiting for her lord,
Your constant image stays in my dull mind,
A Goddess in a lonely temple shrined,
By secret voices of my Soul adored.
There, memory hath inscribed your lightest word.
Tho' rough the tablet, clear enough it's lined,
And drawn in characteries by Love designed
From rare invention in his deep wit stored.
As in a book that's homely, but well-printed,
Unclipt, imperforate of any worm,—
Albeit, by its heavenly binder stinted,
This, to enrich its homelinesses brings
The radiant portrait of one face and form
As a sweet prophecy of lovelier things.

VERITAS

THE Nations have awakened from their trance,
They shout aloud as freedmen that were thralls ;
The Enchantress slinks away whom Ignorance
On savage Fancy gat ; her Empire falls.
On the grim ruins, Truth, fair conqueror, thrones,
Masking each rent with soft embroideries,
Bewitching the bright air with glorious tones
And crowned with roses caught from morning-skies.
O Sovereign stern, to sway this life's events,
All qualities that 'neath thine influence grow
Shall seem Heaven's various tuneful instruments
Playing their several parts, now full, now fine,
Waning and waxing as doth onward flow
The splendorous river of the Song Divine !

A STORM IN WALES

YON veteran oak, a titan among trees
That seems to hold the empire of the air
By rebel demons of the air assailed,
Fresh crimson honours from his bosom sees
Torn, in the mire irreverently trailed,
And all his sovereignty discrowned and bare.
And yonder startled heron quits her stream
And flees the ravening furies of the rain
That fierce,—the eagles of the hurricane,—
On spectral pinions battling, round her scream.
And o'er one glorious peak the lightning shines
Weaving his iron brows a flaming wreath,
While thunder, moaning from lone glens beneath,
Hushes the green harps of the swaying pines.

A DESERT-DREAM

METHOUGHT I saw, (the desert being their throne),
 Enchanted 'neath a soft Assyrian night,
 Rim upon rim, in lines of silvery light,
What might have been the walls of Babylon.
Above a palace-tower the love-star shone,
 Down the entranced air in queenliest might,
 While, toward me flowed, like birds in vernal
 flight,
Soft throbs of song in tenderest monotone.
Such heavenly peace as might all hurts restore,
 Now on the world its balmiest influence shed
Thro' the deep night, from those melodious wings,
Till the star set. And presently, no more
 That song resounded than a leopard's tread ;
And Silence reigned,—itself the King of Kings.

EARTH AND SUN

SUCH glorious flame as wreathed her wondrous limbs,
Flashing with lustres of a million spars
Into the vestal ether where She swims,
And thrilled with rapture her protecting stars,
Now burneth low. Earth's mighty mountain-brims
Cool, shrink, and crumble slowly ; but the scars,
Albeit hidden, remain, where nothing dims,—
Of tearing spasms the awful calendars.
Is there decreed some loosening of the bond
'Twixt Him who holds (Sovereign of our delights),
And Her, his vassal World? Maybe his steeds
Wend wearier the ever-climbing heights ;
Yet not dismay'd,—as viewing lovelier meads
Awaiting in diviner vales, beyond.

VICTORIA

THE storms of dark religions are forepast ;
 The furtive God with fiery penalties,
 Outwitted, slinks to an abhorred abyss,
Leaving to Light and Love his realms, at last.
No more by treacherous night shall spectres vast
 Invade our dearest dreams of earthly bliss,
 No more the air divine, at noonday hiss
With arrows by remorseless demons cast.
We have discrowned our tyrant ; razed his hold ;
 And o'er his realms shall reign for evermore
He, whose delight ingrains the skies above,
 He, whom all trusting eyes, by right, adore,
Who cannot ever fail, wax ever old,—
Whose lips are moulded by the words of Love.

TRUTH

BLIND are they who for outworn creeds despair.
It is not that Christ falls, but Man doth rise,
No longer needing intercessor's eyes ;
For, Truth herself discovereth everywhere.
Never so dim the star but She is there !
From soundless deeps of ocean She replies ;
From hush of twilight forest ; from the ice
That sparkles in serene auroral air.
She lives in throbs of the love-requiem
Our blood beats to us when by taper light
We mark the precious life for aye depart
From some dear face : when, too, some ruffian gleam
Cleaves the deep bosom of a summer night
And we lie thrall'd beneath its thundering heart.

THE CREATIVE SPIRIT

'I CATCH the accidental spark
That giveth light where all was dark.
No finding out was mine to claim,
Who only kindle it to flame.
My one poor merit it hath shone
Because I strove to hand it on,
So it should give a glorious light
To others wandering in the night
And merely show them where to cull
Things which were always Beautiful.'

FOR A CHILD'S FUNERAL

EVEN as we take a spray of almond-bloom
 When bleak winds blow and skies are dull,
 So pink, so fresh, so beautiful,
And place in some fair vase to deck our room,—
The Eternal bears this little one to rest,
 So fair and fine, so sweet, each limb,—
 From our dark world, to be with Him,
And dream of us upon His glorious breast.

THE FEAR OF MAN

BEFORE me browsing on the budded thorns,
 As once I wandered down a darkening glade,
I saw a lordly Deer with branching horns,
 Blithe in his glory, jewelling the green shade.
His flanks, bedropt, as from a silvery shower,
 Charmed the lush twigs he cropped ; his eyes in bliss
Foiled with fond lashes each impetuous flower
 That strained as if their flower-like lids to kiss.
Then fell I pondering the mysterious plan
 Each brute in Us his direst foe should see,
(Minding the cureless anguish wrought by Man),
 That snake to stag less fearful seemed than me ;
For throwing up his beauteous head, anon,
This dumb Thing knew,—and, as a dream, was gone.

NIRVANA

THE tiny drop that owns no aid of limbs,
For aught we know, enjoys its liberty ;
In the broad volume of the ocean swims,
Mixed with the mighty sum of all the sea :
Yet once informed of office in it stirred,
Feeling the power inward life expand,
It seems to hear a voice thus unheard,
And mounts, obeying the Sun's command
Into resplendent light in whose domain
It makes a mansion, cool, and burns
Upon the troubled life the air.
From thence, again in silver rain
E'en thus the Soul, released from earthly care
Into reunions with the Divine returns.

SHAKESPERE

IN truth, He was 'Divine' men declare ;
Tho' veiled in flesh that owns decay,—
A very lord of glorious fay
That carried Heaven everywhere.
But oftener moves than men are 'ware
The Immortal round with mortal clay
Whose words are dawns of spiritual
That, livening to the dead, make it more fair
We are mere points, starlike 'Whole,'
Whose aid the encircling
Far love's aided eye divine
Goes forth, Universal Soul,
Bringing forth, in whose
The world's eternal Beau-

SPRING

THE soft red blossoms fall to the dark earth,
And kindle it with kisses into flame,
Fair as the blush when Love confesses worth,
And fills the face's garden with sweet shame.
Most gentle airs among the trees are wooing
Venturous leaves from unpropitious boughs ;
And there the fervent voice of Love, renewing,
Comforts their life with sound of tender vows.
Upon the lake, myriads of ripples, gleaming,
Whisper delight to the desiring shore
That waves their golden message thro' its grass,
Like sweet thoughts o'er the face of one that's dreaming ;
While in the joyous height above, where pass
Mute underbreaths of heaven, the lark doth soar.

A WAYFARER, WHOSE NAME IS DEATH

I

THE fitful breeze that stirred, is still,
And the green wayside groweth chill,
Where with tranquil measured pace,
And a more than noble air,
A lone unwearied Cavalier,
Darkly-mantled, white of face,
All silently comes by.
And lo, (we scarce know why),
We raise our insubmissive eyes,
To rudely recognise.

II

His deep, cold eyes resemble
Young willow-leaves atremble
By the rivers in the morn.
Though he looks at us, not hard,
With a gaze that may be borne,—

A WAYFARER, WHOSE NAME IS DEATH

Men ever deem His cold regard

Is fixed on others more forlorn !

And yet this gaze why should one fear ?

For softly as the western wind,

He comes to one will deem him kind,

A sweet, all-healing, Comforter.

ROSES ON AN OLD ROSE-TREE

FAIR crafty pleaders, who with heavenly breath,
 (Reiteration exquisitely pure),
Shape fresh appeals to turn the knife of death
 That hungers for your drear discomfiture.
Bloom on, sweet Roses!—murderous blind Neglect
 That reigned so long is driven from his mock throne ;
And for his cold irreverent defect,
 Argus himself shall lovingly atone.
Love's advocate, who hath your courage fed,
 Winneth. You have no rivals left to grudge
His golden favour. One by one they're dead,
 Or turned to biting briars in despair
At your advantage. Beauty bribes the judge ;
 Even wild Autumn seems to whisper—'Spare !'

TO SPENSER

FULL oft at close of golden day serene,
 When the gruff gales of Spring have ceased to rage,
 Have I sought out some woodland hermitage,
And under veteran boughs of tenderest green
Offered new homage to the Faery Queen,
 The while, as by the might of Archimage,
 Bright drops of elfin fire across the page
Flitting, as by a spell, transformed the scene.
Then, with the Poet, hand in hand, I wis,
 Have I descried the hardy red-cross Knight
 Who won the smile of Una fair, released ;—
 Have heard with doughty dints young Arthur smite
 The giant huge, or wound the blatant beast ;—
And, lost in wonders, found the Bower of Bliss.

AMOR

THERE is a Seraph clad in glorious plumes
Which moves along the zenith, like a dove,
And, the strange starless deeps of night illumines
That singing sweet, make question : What is Love ?
Of LIGHT, it is the all-informing soul
That thro' it rules, immaculately pure.
It has touched everything that's beautiful ;
For Loveliness is Love's own signature !
Redeeming each dim waste by mortal trod,
Love, the great Traveller, akin may be
To the rich waft of western cedar-wood,
Far-found in wandering o'er some lonely sea,
Men draw into their souls exultingly
Where no friend is—and feel it to be God.

THE ITALIAN LAKES

By flowering plains of rippled emerald rise
The hills that hide our home, where, in a zone,
Proud, ice-crown'd Titans clamber up the skies,
(Even whence they fell, perchance, and turned to
stone);—
Who, to their brows, rich woods of oak sustain,
Whose mighty sockets ebon lakes confine,
That gaze with sullen glance to heaven again
As minded ever of their birth divine.
Above, bright-bosomed clouds in silvery teams,
Like yokes of dove-white oxen, toil along,
(O labour sweet, to be so sweetly spent!)—
That heard, at dawn, of mountain-bird, the song,
Tought the glad woods,—may still retain the scent
Of April flowers, the coolness of the streams.

CARMEN TRIUMPHALE

Not for wild Chaos, but for nobler Law
Do men look now. In the keen brightening air
Untruth retires : his demon wings withdraw
Across the bitter waters of despair !
Let us arise, and, with replenish't powers,
And music, hasten to the fields of Day,
To breathe the fragrance of irradiant flowers
In a sweet, snowless, universal May !
Let none its honours to this Age deny,
Or say our Time hath unheroic been ;
Rather, the most heroic age of all.
For we have rushed his stronghold, and, serene,
Have interviewed our Tyrant, eye to eye,
And now hold Him, who first held us, in thrall.

TO M. L.

A SPIRIT haunts this garden, turns to light
The tristful shadow by misfortune spread,
Defies the dark dominion of the night,
And all the ghostly train by sorrow bred.
No mortal pen may trace its radiant mien,
Impalpable as Love ; but here it lives :
With deep delight endues the hallowed scene,
And to the humblest herb a gladness gives.
What, tho' harsh voices through the dim air pour,—
Of frightened merle that in the laurel shrills,
Of storms that in the reddening beeches roar,
Of thunders baffled in the coiling hills ?
They cannot raise, nor can they aught impair,
The heavenly charm your Beauty centres here.

UNTRUTH

THERE is a shore embathed by summer seas,
Where, after sundown, from the glittering surge
Beautiful syrens singing sweet emerge,
And ravish night with tenderest harmonies.
The while they sing, unnumbered votaries,
Old, young and fair, in frenzy toward them urge,
Till the blithe song they sing becomes a dirge
O'er victims drowning thro' their treacheries.
Thus, each night, fare these dire enchantresses,
Till scenting the blest fragrance of the morn,
Disconsolate, they glide beneath the wave.—
Even, thus, what charm soe'er may her adorn,
Untruth, at Truth's approach, as to her grave,
Sinks down to bitter depths of nothingness.

AFTER THE FIGHT

WIND and unwind the storm-cloud's ebon locks,
Fold rolled on awful fold, across the land,
To the stern crags that rattled all night long !
The battle has gone by : The foe-men flee !
Only the gleaming rivulet's broken steel
Falls, like the tears of Beauty, down the vale,
Where lie our Heroes, terrible in death.
Above them gloom, like mighty Gods, asleep,
Lone shattered cedars and oblivious pines.

GOSSAMERS

THIN threads of light along the glimmering lawns
And dripping silver from Elysian flowers
Weave softly for this loveliest of dawns,
The dream-like raiment of the flying Hours,
Where-through we apprehend their loveliness.
Could Time stand still, we should be happy now,
And break our pleading swords and seal a vow
Of love for all Mankind ; forswear excess,
And nurse the Arts. But Time, the cunning elf,
Makes feathers of us to re-theek his nest,
And limits everything—except himself
And That within us which outlives the rest.

THE YELLOW-AMMER

O WHO may tell the joys that heart conceives
Which suddenly thy tender descant hears,
When through the hedge thy glowing breast appears,
Like daybreak in the twilight of the leaves?
Etherial argosy of living light
That wingest happy o'er the wandering corn,
Fairer are not the rays of earliest morn,
Or shining stars that streak November's night!
Thy beauty is a draft upon the Sun
That music honours; thy bewitching call
Might be the voice of some melodious star,
Far-borne, repeating to us 'Day is done,'—
But too-abounding thy rich honours are,
A Sonnet's little world should hold them all!

[*Horton, Bucks.*]

A WESTERN STORM

I

LEAPS the wind light-hearted from the flowering caves
Yonder purpling headland hides, the lord of waves :—
Bounds the mighty midway crags a gleam with gorse,
Spoils the samphire strongholds in unheeding course,
Smites the sullen brows above them, to and fro
Rocking the dwarf pines that cling there. Far below,
Famish't sea-fowl, scanned each crevice, out to sea
Bend their pearly quivering plumes, and cry with glee
As a broad emerald roller swells beneath and sings
Sweeping soft the silvery hollows of their wings.
Far across the blackening strait the sea-line fails
Dimly, welding with the duskier hills of Wales,
Where dilating domes of thunder from the West
Dream, like roses pillowed on the fair land's breast.
Others, nearer, waxing mightier as they wend,
Urge amain the sun's dominion blithe to rend
Driving back the glimmering borders of the light,
Thralling nature ere the dayset, as with Night.
Fiercely crush they, one on other, hot in haste,
Pressing round the sweet hush'd land, to lay her waste.

A WESTERN STORM

Imp-like wraiths of evil dark before them flee,—
Hounds of air, that mate between the sky and sea,
Wolves, that o'er the salt green meadows vainly turn
Hungering fiery eyes that search the wave they spurn.
See, the Rainsteeds darken, and the hail's quick spears
Cleave the wind unfaltering, bright as mortal tears,
While lethargic thunder echoing in the crags,
Growls in grim far-down ravines, and harshly drags
Silence from her caverns deep. Hark how the waves
Dash the unyielding cliff's colossal feet, like slaves
Driven to their death ! Mark, too, the morning-winged
flowers

Rendering hapless treasure to the tyrant showers
Anger of all the embattled cloud-host to appease,
From the inexorable woe to win release !
Vain, in vain are given, unwooded, all tender gifts.
On them triple vengeance, lo, the tempest lifts,
Crash on awful crash,—mad crimson hands that glare
Till, as a ravening furnace throbs the all-glittering air,
Rings the affrighted earth ; while ocean's answering
breast

Breaks insuperable wrath, and crag and crest
Blaze with thousand fiery streams, in god-like mail
Seen through drift and spume where Titan hordes
assail,

Guarding heaven where'er the battle whirlwind roams
Even as these defend this heaven of English homes.

A WESTERN STORM

II

For there, in the hollow of woodland enfolded, away
from the sea,
And at peace in a world of beauty, a Lady of high degree
Is Queen of the olden manor, who loveth all sounds that
are fair ;
The croon of the tender quest,—not blasts of the forges
of air
In the glowing caverns of cloudland, or stories of olden
crime ;—
The sound of the blossoms abreaking, the symphony in
the lime,
The note of the mavis at sundown, when casements are
blushing with fire,
And calm of the twilight comes, the crown of the day's
desire.
These all are her dear delights, and she the Sovereign
of all ;
But the storm is a sword of terror that gleams in her
ancient hall
Aflash in the warrior-faces high-set in their carven frames,
That look on us out of the days when all the land was
in flames,—
When the baffled King turned eastward, whose days of
defeat had begun,
Held firmler each day in the web of the threads that his
Fate had spun.

A WESTERN STORM.

III

But lo ! the wild wind-lords waver, and softly ariseth again
From the gardens a virginal savour of flowers refreshed
with the rain ;
And the air is re-filled with a wonder of light as the
clouds unfold,
Till the hills, with singing for thunder, wear garlands of
gold,
And grasses on sea-craggs a-swaying with sea-pinks agleam
in the sun,
Like strings of a harp that are playing long after the
song is done,
Are smitten by unseen fingers, whereunder the great
seas thrill
Like bands of aërial singers awaiting the sign to be still.
Now the sun, to the skies of to-morrow gone down with
a lusty glow
Like a god, with all trace of sorrow clear-wash't from his
golden brow,
Hath left not a cloud, nor a motion of air, telling battle
hath been ;
And the star-kings ride o'er the ocean, with mid-summer
Night for their queen.

IN MEMORIAM

(A. H. B., *Nov.* 6, 1896)

ONE who was loved and beautiful is dead!
Do the dear ways that knew Her gentle tread,
The touch of perfect glory, grow more gray?—
The house-fronts that knew well where, day by day,
She dwelt, and made a Heaven, forego their light?—
Only a temporary touch of night,
As for the loss, hath woven a wintry veil,
Making all values droop and seem to fail,
Albeit each flower wins brighter,—as it were
A miracle had rendered each more fair.
With beauty unforeknown, and touched its heart
With glory that transcends all use of Art;
And these have rained around her where she lies
A silent throng of soft celestial eyes,
Only to fade whenso her beauty dies;—
(Divine companionship, that sanctifies
Their dying)! And lo, the drab familiar walls,
As though arrayed with flowering crimson shawls,
Reflect a setting sun we may not see,
All day unseen, but suddenly cloud-free;

IN MEMORIAM

And spreading the rose-wonder thro' the room,
Restore to that still face its maiden bloom,
Till it o'erflows with beauty, life in death,—
And loves the air, yet takes not one poor breath!
There lies the happy Mother, Sister, Wife,
In peace,—that was the Soul of it in life :
A friend, in whom all virtues did convene,
Being Loveliness's bright unconscious Queen,
Incomparable ! O who may tell her worth,
Who never was out-rivalled yet on Earth ?
Love her, thou Sun, that shalt not set again
Within the rosy waters of the main,
And find her here ! Love her, then, while thou may'st !
Love her, ye tender flowers ! Death maketh haste
To rob from you, e'en that he reft us of ;
And we shall own no more but her sweet love,
To-morrow ! O keep with her to the last !
Soon, soon this Present changes into Past.

BEAUTY

BEAUTY that cannot die, no farewell needs ;
Darling of an Immortal Sire, proceeds
From Love himself and Light, that grow more rich,
Like kindred heirs, by marriage. And, a witch
Men deem Her, for she makes the river flow
Back to its source which none may ever know,
Yet show more bounteous each return. In time,
Therefore, all shall be Beautiful ; and crime,
And misery, and madness, be no more
Than bleaching bones on some abandoned shore.

DAWN

AT MERGOZZO [1892]

I HEAR the golden bugles of the dawn
Over the mountains, whence the Night hath flown ;
And all the leaves that rustled with her flight
Are stilled for joy. For, hearken, from above,
The happy winds are wafting sweet blithe songs
From yon fair clouds, whose free resplendent locks
Are floating down the sky in dazzling gold,—
Whose bosoms seem to swell, as answering
Some rhythmic symphony from other worlds,—
Far faery Worlds, imperishable as Love,—
Where, maybe, never heart hath ached, nor sigh
Hath pained the tender air,—ay, worlds that sway
Like blossoms in the breath of God Himself,
That brightens round them—Dawn that never dies !

TO A LADY

I

DEEP liquid eyes, so dark, so proud,
Unmeasured heavens that may not cloud,
That hold in fee more glorious treasure
Than the guardian seas of azure
Where forgotten Kingdoms lie ;—
Even as the souls of lovers fly,
Like Halcyons over April seas,
Far, through their dreamy radiances,
Upon Life's gray and thirsting plain,
Your welcome sweet compassions rain,
Stored with alleviative might,
Reviving all where they alight,
And build the bow of hope again.

II

With a divine inspired unthrift,
Early and late your splendours lift,
Like never-failing beacons fair,
Above the cliffs of bleak despair,—
Streaming across the spume and drift
To cheer the baffled mariner.

TO A LADY

You grant the rich more perfect things
Than riches give, or banquetings,
While, from the poor you charm distress,
Leaving them crowned with happiness,—
 Its very Kings.

III

My lady, to possess all these,
The wine of Love at feast of Light,
With everything that, sweet and bright,
Our life can please,
Concentred in your maiden dower,
Like petals in a perfect flower,—
Shews you of Heaven presumptive heir.
O bliss untold for it to gaze,
To hear from you its tenderest praise,—
 And mark those lips in prayer !

A MYSTERY OF THE GRECIAN SEA

SOFT moonbeams, white as summer doves,
O'er-snow the waves that will not rest,
Heaving, like Aphrodite's breast
Tender with dreams of coming loves ;
And I am near them, on the sand,
While, from the darkness, o'er the land,
Enthroned on rolling leagues of pine,
Unloosing every link of care,
Mute breaths of sweet Ionian air
Move, making night divine.

II

But hark from yonder liliated swards
Of wandering sea, where Dian dreams,
There swells and wanes a sound that seems
To thrill the listening universe ;
Like voices of the antique bards
It shapes a mighty song that streams
O'er underbreathing dulcimers !

A MYSTERY OF THE GRECIAN SEA

III

And while I pause to listen here,
A shape like Love's with wondrous eyes
(Tho' merely wrought of golden air),
From the wan water doth arise :
Near, and nearer, to me gaineth,
While the magic music waneth,
And I feel a hand's cool pressure,
Know the exquisite ripe measure
Of a beauty-breathing being ;—
Dream I know that mouth, those eyes,
Albeit, they slay all memories
With love agreeing.

IV

Vainly I court the mystic face,
To solve the secret for my soul ;
Within its beauty try to trace
A past revealing my control.
In vain, I summon dreams remote,
From other days,—a bitter train,
Though love-inspired,—that might explain
The ripple of the glimmering hair,
The tender chin, the dim white throat
The mouth for kisses made so fair,
In vain !

A MYSTERY OF THE GRECIAN SEA

V

Then, with a sigh that withers up my heart
Her death-like hand relaxed, she turns from me,
Head-bent ; so, sobbing, slowly doth depart ;
And fadeth, weeping to the singing sea.

Then from the moaning leagues of pine
Mad breaths of burnt Numidian air
Rush by me ; while the lightnings glare
Thro' Night no more divine.

THE HALCYONS

ONCE, ere rose her queenliest years on Corinth,
Lo, the dove-eyed nereid Amphitrite
Gliding thro' the lazulite halls of Ocean,

Daughter of Tethys,
Heard the cry of maidenly tribulation
Threading thro' the lordlier song of waters,
Caught the piteously tender plaint of

Fatherless daughters
Wildly wailing, even as the winds in Autumn,
Murdered father Alcyonæus vanquisht,
Done to a death inglorious, by the cruel

Son of Alcmene !¹
Then, her beauty, motionless held she, listening
While the waning music of blended voices
Pouring through the azure abyss of ocean

Took her with pity,—
And she saw quick shafts of the sungod falling
In her precious glittering cup of omen,
Where pale, crowding, virginal, woe-worn faces
Meekly besought her.

¹ Hercules.

THE HALCYONS

Straight, irradiant, smiling with inspiration,
O'er the vessel waving a silver sceptre,
Swift she turned the dolorous tender maidens

Into blithe Halcyons.

Wherefore, sailors, curbed of her lord Poseidon,
Noting, seaward, arrowlike flying birdlets,
May full surely trust to the wind and water,
Scorning the haven.

IN EGYPT

(TO SIR RENNEL RODD, K.C.M.G.)

YON lofty palm with feathery crown,
A lonely Queen enchanted stands,
A Cleopatra of the sands,
Unconscious of her fair renown.
Entranced there, she nothing heeds,
The serpent rustling in the canes,
The scarlet Ibis, the slim cranes
That wander in and out the reeds ;
But, radiant with her crown of gems,
Enjoys the dream of ancient things,
The wonders of the King of Kings,
The Lord of distant diadems ;—
The temples, roofless evermore,—
The solemn Sphinx, with lifted lids,
The herbless reddening Pyramids,
And eagles that above them soar.
There, throned upon that peaceful strand
In beauty that may never tire,
She bids the sunset's raging fire
Flow softly through her quiet land.



THERMAE ANTONINIANAE

THAT these proud walls might hymn the days of yore,
Declare what statues ravishing the air
With beauty filled their niches cracked and bare!
What generations trode this perish't floor!
Of marble wonders, sing the mighty store:—
Of Phrygian, violet-veined; of Ophite rare;
Myriads of Lemnian columns virgin-fair:
Dark Africano, warm; and Parian, hoar!
What athletes ran! What orators held sway!
What sages themed! What poets charmed the ear,—
Since Caracalla darkened Roman day!
But what were all of these, how rich so-e'er
The wonder they adorned, when we can say
Of Shelley, that 'he wrote Prometheus here'?

SPRING

Lo, Spring the fettered world unbinds !
The eagle-pinion'd mountain-winds
Their giddy freedom now regain ;
And, keen to press the scented plain,
Stoop as fond lovers of our land,
To kiss each hollow of her hand,
And their reciprocal delight
Wakens new lilies every night.
Then, ravish't by their sweet excess,
On the blue sea they gentlier press,
Where, turned from eagles into doves,
To Men they bring not storms,—but loves.

A DAY OF SPRING

I

THE flashing glorious wheels of golden Spring
Entwined with daffodils invade the land :
Beside her car the Loves are wantoning ;
Lily and violet rise at her command.
The Lord of Light is but a slave of her's,
And showers and winds her menial ministers.
She is the Queen of Beauty, on whose brows
A light of hallowed rapture glows ;
Her dreams are flowers : and when to sing she stirs,
At every syllable she breathes a rose.

II

Mirrored within the silken streams
The dove-white clouds appear like dreams,
Or shapes entranced of Love that pass
In an Enchanter's glass ;
While on the mountain-kings around,
The larches tall in clambering hordes,
Waving a thousand emerald swords,
Utter a joyous sound.

A DAY OF SPRING

III

It is Creation's hymn, the Song of Songs,
That, sweet with choral murmur calm prolongs
Orphéan harmony that undersings
The roaring dissonance of a world of woes ;
The magic strain it brings,
Of all his bitterness mute grief beguiles ;
It is a re-assuring joy that flows
Fresh from the well of everlasting smiles,
Quick from the inmost heart of Heaven above,
That throbs with Love.

IV

Fast, fast, the forest heaves
Her breast of sun-bright leaves ;
The wings of morning filled with might
Are gathering to the feast of Light :
Cloud-cities roll back, fold on fold,
Refulgent gates of burnisht gold,
Revealing, ravishingly fair,
The azure kingdoms of the air.
For perfect Spring is here : Earth's heart expands
And the fond air with daintiest odour thrills
The happy April hours,
A tide of splendour breaks upon the lands,
Flooding the glorious feet of the great hills
In glittering billows of Elysian flowers.

A DAY OF SPRING

V

Lo, like a joyous ocean-bird,
The God of Light up-mounting high,
From every suppliant vapour clear'd
In splendour cleaves the crystal sky,
Whence, as of Life, the Emperor, sublime,
He smiles across the rhythmic deeps of Time,
And hears the tide roll through Eternity.

VI

Ay, he listens to the sound of all that sings :
Hails the clarioned hymn of banded warrior-nations,
Chastened, rising ever to more perfect powers ;
Sees beneath him shine the Kingdoms of the Kings,
Glorious freeholds of the unborn generations :
And all the glittering seas, like shields of silver
Wreathed in flowers.

VII

O, bright is earth around us, bright
As Love's own wings, the Lord of Light :
Sweet is the air above, O, sweet,
The heavenly lawns that feel his feet,
His is the breath of Life, for he,
Loved monarch, is of land and sea,
The gracious Lord of Seasons, one
In might and majesty, the Sun.

A DAY OF SPRING

VIII

See how the green oaks interwreath
Their mighty arms, while underneath
Rich volumes of the fields unrolled
Are spread like sheets of virgin gold—
The radiant missals of the Spring,
Wherefrom blithe choristers do sing,
Lading the universal air
With rapture sweet, past all compare.
The glorious God, with golden eye,
Now dreameth down the Western sky :
And blossoms from his reddening wreath
Are raining on the world beneath,
Where evening-flowers divinely fair,
With perfume trance the crimson air,
While birds renew their symphonies
From bridal-chambers in the trees,
And elfin flies, in glory dight,
Are dancing in the low-shot light ;
And fays themselves in darkening dells
Are peeping from the cowslip-bells !

IX

Far-off, athwart, the meadows green,
The winding rivers flash with fire,
And race the woodlands dark between,
To where, remote, a city shines
With glittering palaces and shrines,
And one ærial spire ;—

A DAY OF SPRING

Frail human dwelling-place devised
By Man, but now etherialised
 By hands that work Diviner wills,—
A wonder-world imparadised
 Amid the quiet hills!
E'en thus, the City of the Soul,
 On twice ten thousand pillars raised,
High, many-mansioned, beautiful,
 Illumined by the light of Love,
Afar her golden radiance throws
Over Life's garden, like a rose,
And flings a joyful peal to bless
 The flowering lands where Genius fought
With Priest, and won assured access
 To everlasting thrones of Thought.

x

But lo, it fades !
And see, the herald shades
 The reign of Night proclaim ;
While the abyss of blue
 With drops of budding flame
Puts forth its gifts of gold
And splendours manifold,
That quiver to the tones that rise
From this re-quicken'd Paradise !

A DAY OF SPRING

For, like two hearts wherein Love sounds advance,
These pulse to one another, glance for glance,
Pressure for pressure, word for wondrous word ;
But when their final troth shall be complete,
The bright immortal lips grown close to meet
Shall be unheard.

SUMMER

I

Out of the garden's balmy breast
A breath of Love is blown abroad,
The happy fields in glory dressed
Salute the morning for their Lord ;
And on the air, so sunned and sweet,
Leaves, making music as they meet,
A sound as one of merry waves
That ripple in the Western caves,
Fill full the listening soul with peace ;
And from the love-deeps in the trees
Unceasingly the amorous croon
Of doves enrapturing the air
Is murmuring in the ear of June
Of all that's sweet and fair.

II

Yon glowing bed of blazoned gules,
By all its valiant splendour shows
A South-wind, from the liliated pools,
Auspiciously hath touched the Rose,
(And bidden every bud uncloze,)

SUMMER

Whose crimson hordes in mirthful might,
With companies of beauty bright,
May fill the Summer with delight.
And, there, enringed with dropworts hoar
That listen while the larks do soar,
Tall butter-cups the meadows hold—
A universe of whispering gold,
An Elfin forest, whence old trees,
(Like giants hidden to their knees,)
Spring, hoar with blossom, here and there,
To make the scene more heavenly fair.
Nor, thus beheld, need wonder be
Soft raiment sweepeth daintily
Where Beauty spends her happiest hours
Among the golden-dusted flowers,
Now, in the sunlight ; now, in shade,
The maiden Goddess of the glade.

[*Painswick.*]

SILVA VITÆ

LIFE's woodland, Love o'erwaveth like a sea.
All aspirations in us that are fair
Make for that upper realm, would flourish there
In unclouded immortality.
For, to that main of Light, each sympathy,
Virtue, and grace, climb and co-operate
Thro' hindering toils, discovering, (even tho' late,
At last,) with joy, their golden destiny.
Should want, or greed, or blighting fear, abase,
Uncoil from height we did erewhile attain,
If but a fearless soul within us tries,
As perfectly may we bud out again,
Again adorn the light ;—at worst, give place
To others, may be worthier, being more wise.

VESPERUS

FAIR star that dost on Ocean's bosom lie,
Thy glittering hair is floating on the waves,
(That are his breaths of love,—thy faithful slaves) ;
Like dawn relumining this happy sky ;
The dark air sings above it thro' the night ;—
Sings of thy beauty to each passing cloud
Borne by it here, lest any dare to shroud
With envious veil thy glorious lamp of light.
O teach me, too, with accent strong and fair
To sing thy splendid praise ! With light, endow
For, is not my soul dark as this night-air ?
Thou art the star She loved,—whose beauty made
The dim Earth glow like heaven to me, that, now,
Is surely grown the place of nether shade !

SUNSET AT ISOLA MADRE

THE Day-God sinks behind the hills,
And evening all the lake-land fills.
Verbano's waves the pebbles beat
In love-words whispering at our feet :
While from above, like some old king,
Who, coming Death at last perceives,
An Aspen pours down, spiralling,
His summer hoard of silvery leaves.
Range upon range uprolled on high,
Stern mountains to the unclouded sky
In domes of granite darkly tower,
To where, like some great purple flower,
One Sovereign crest, alone, aglow,
Is telling the husht Earth below,
That though he owns the sway of Night,
He still surveys the Lord of Light.
But darkness, like a wraith, doth rise
Above the Titan's throat and eyes,
And from the air his glory dies.

LOTOS CAPILLATA¹

(TO LIONEL PHILLIPS, ESQ.)

WHO goes so soft toward Vesta's holy shrine,
Stern in her sweetness?—With submissive head,
Yet with eyes fixed and fierce, as one in dream,
Treading some accusation under foot,
And all alone? For lo, the snowy walls
Gleam like the moon what-time our shadowing world
Blots out her beauty—then again appears
Fairer than we have passed!—a portal opes!
A white hand draws her in, with never a word;
Only an instant's pressure,—till she glides
'Tween fluted shafts of fair and glorious grain
Into the fountained court, mosaic paven,
Beauteous: though darkened by the cruel shade
Of Him whose palace so shuts out the sun
Perforce the Virgin roses there are white,
Even as the vestal marble. Lived there, one
Less white than that? A cell is vacant there.

¹ In the House of Vesta, in the Forum, is recorded to have flourished an ancient DIOSPYROS LOTOS; upon the boughs of which were wont to be suspended the shorn tresses of the youthful votaresses on their entering the Sacred Sisterhood. Hence it was called 'Lotus Capillata,' and it must have presented a curious appearance. It constituted in Imperial times a notable relic of Tree-Worship.

LOTOS CAPILLATA

A crowd was seen about the Colline Gate¹
Three days ago. The Gods alone may know!
An ancient Lotos-tree beside the fount,
Prodigious, over-darkens with its boughs
The pattern'd floor : and, quickened by the Spring,
Half-hides the votive tresses hanging there
As envious of their loveliness.—Even here
Advanced, the Mother's wan prophetic eyes
Pierce through the emerald screen,—her thin white hand
Lifteth the soft green leaves, as once she raised
The coverlet to view a sleeping babe.

Ah ! Fell necessity ! See how she sinks,
The silken tress held closely to her lips,
Calm on the pavement, dead ! Is Caesar glad ?

¹ Campus Sceleratus.

A SUNSET

THE glittering legions
Of thunder that floated
Athwart the hot zephyr
Northward have drifted
O'er the dark valleys
Into their strongholds,
Leaving behind them
Pale clear azure
Fields of untroubled
Lilies of heaven.

Unblurred in the spacious
Waters, unrippled,
Uptowering highlands
Immirrored, serenely
Receive from the rose-red
Hands of the Sun-God,
Crowns that are blowing
With glorious blossom.

A SUNSET

Brightens each moment
The crimson splendour,
Mystic, enchanting ;
While the deep shadow
Of Earth, dear Mother,
Calmly, unresting,
Heavenward in silence
Ascendeth her mountains.

[*Locarno.*]

MIDNIGHT BY MAGGIORE

GRIM as thunder-smitten Titans,
Huddled up in hush'd confusion
At the glorious feet of Heaven,
Sleep the granite-girdled mountains,
All their morning wrath forgotten.
Only silver-sceptred cloudlets,
Crowned with radiant stars, are guardians
Of the palaces of Morning.
Soft as cendal, laden with the
Love-dreams of the jasmine-blossom,
Gliding thro' the aisles and arch-lets
Of this South-land cypress-garden,
Moves the magic breath of Summer
From the dark unrippled water,
As it were a soul from Heaven,
Breath of all-creative Beauty.
Lazily the fire-flies wander :
Lazily the fountain plashes ;
All the nightingales are silent.
Merely chimes from o'er the waters,
From a dark tower on the island,
Solemnly proclaiming midnight
To the dreaming World of mortals,
Bid the lily stir with rapture.

LINES NEAR MILAN

(To H. E. GENERAL FERRERO, GOVERNOR OF MILAN)

I

How still the air ! The morn, how bright,
Where Milan lies embathed with light—
Light, the sweet balm which makes men kings,
That breathes the soul of heavenly things !
There, from the waste of roofs below,
One glorious pyramid of snow,
The Virgin of our Lombard sky,
Enthroned, entrances every eye,
Lifting her bosom passing fair
To meet the kiss of Heaven's own air ;
Seeming, of her rich love to bless
With everlasting loveliness,
The villages that pearl the plain
(Like islands in the southern main),
That waves its emerald wheat afar
To where the purple mountains are.
For see,—in never-ending lines,
The pollard trunks that hold the vines,

LINES NEAR MILAN

(As aged Fauns may fold the charms
Of infant Bacchus in their arms,)
Belie their looks of gnarled age,
And bloom with double foliage ;
And, nearer, mark yon hamlet old
With rose is girdled, white and gold,
And other flowers that softly thrall
Its battlements and belfry tall,
Each heightening each, until our sense
Thrills at their love's magnificence,—
Whose petals fall to kiss the feet
Of wayfarers within the street.
And lo, enchantingly it tells
Out Mezzo-giorno from the bells,
While happy swallows glide around
Enraptured by the full sweet sound.

II

Would any deem such quiet fields
Had heard the clash of meeting shields ;
The shout, the rush, the shrieks, and then,
The last despairs of dying men,—
Had seen the valour of the slain
Poured on the vines in bloody rain ?
Yet Gaul, and Goth, and Teuton lord,
Each, here, with his tempestuous horde,
Has hurtled through the sweet green land
With sword, and spear, with crackling brand

LINES NEAR MILAN

And thundering steed, and left behind
Death riding in the glaring wind
Above huge mounds of ruined stones,
Reddened with fire, but white with bones.

III

And yet of Those, the worst, at least,
Less guilty than the skulking Priest
I deem, with his insatiate greed
Born of the true Satanic seed,—
Who darkened here in days of yore,
Drawing their secrets from the Poor :
Well-skilled in sacred lore to show
The widow in her hour of woe
That she had wandered from the Fold,
And must return through fire, or gold,—
The crazy lass that mingled charms
To bring her true-love to her arms,
That she was now the devil's bride,
And from the faithful must divide.
Here, having all from them entic't,
He burnt them,—in the name of Christ !

IV

Five hundred summers since have rolled
Their glorious waves of green and gold :
And Italy, long nursed in pain,
New glory day by day doth gain,

LINES NEAR MILAN

And the whole earth delights to see
Her children stand among the free,
Herself arrayed as Beauty's Queen !
For her great soul beneath the screen
Of all this beauty softly heaves
Like summer 'neath her perfect leaves,
As, taking comfort of the sun,
That Love and Peace in her are one.

THE GARDEN OF AUGUSTUS

(TO ERSILIA GAETANI, CONTESSA LOVATELLI)

HIS marble halls are dust-heaps of the earth.
The golden glory of his porticoes
That looked across the garden where the rose
Twice-flowering, sweet, of Poseidonian¹ birth,
Bloomed in the throbbing murmur of soft leaves
Of sacred Lotos,² and the whisper light
Of laurels,—vanisht ! While a sullen thunder grieves
Above the lonely ruins, and the might
Of storm-wind riving the battalioned clouds,
Scatters their dust. Yet here the balmy wings
Of Zephyrs, laden from the western isles,
Like Argosies invisible, in crowds,
Have fanned the forehead of the King of Kings
Among his morning flowers, or when the day
Forgat its fiery ardours, and for miles
Round Rome, irradiant the Campagna lay
Asleep—like him, the Lord of the known Earth.
Here, sweeter than the chimes of silver bells
His favourite fountain flashed in rippling mirth,
Weaving around him more delightful spells
Than Livia's beauty, or Virgilian song.

¹ Biferique rosaria Pæsti. Georg : iv. 116.

² Diospyros.

THE GARDEN OF AUGUSTUS

Ay, here he may have smiled in that bright morn,
When, through the Forum, throng on silvery
throng,
Green-garlanded, the choicest maids in Rome,
With each a golden youth to Hymen sworn,
Waving the holy laurels, as they sang
The 'Carmen Sæculare,' to this home,—
His and Apollo's, on the Palatine,
Rejoicing wended ; the Immortal bard
Leading his glorious anthem ! How it rang
Through the pure air to the proud marble shrine,—
Where Dian, dread, a less austere regard
Assumed I trow for her fair worshippers !
Ah, what a scene was that !—Then, what fell curse,
What bloodstained axe of Fate hath fallen here,
And reft the world of Beauty of a pearl
Incomparable ?—We only seem to see,
In an ill dream, Destruction ravening there,
Hot shrieking tongues of tigerish flame that curl
Around the crumbling columns in their glee,—
To hear the ruining statues of the Gods
Crash from their niches on the marble floors
In awful thunder : as with her own rods,
Rome, the Eternal, beaten, broken, burned,
Prone at the feet of many Conquerors !

But, lo, the happy light for which we yearned
Breaks on the soft noon air like golden flowers

THE GARDEN OF AUGUSTUS

Falling in wreaths, where all is hushed and still—
This grave of Empire ; while, with tenderest powers,
A nightingale, as though his passionate thrill
Of ecstasy might serve as requiem
For those departed glories, mourns for them,
Till, mounting with his rapture sweet and strong,
He fills the gap of Ages—with a song !

S. ANTONIO AT TIVOLI

TRIM leaves of light are scattered down the sky
By hands unseen, and, o'er the Sabine hills
Rich incense rises from the vestal flowers.
Forsooth some glorious God is passing by :
For all the morning with his splendour thrills,
Whose music pours from Heaven in happy showers
Like petals from ten thousand roses rained !
Soft are the thunderings of the cataracts
Where Anio leaps the emerald abyss
With all his mountain fury fierce unchained ;
Tho' yonder, gliding free, through misty tracts,
Behold, he threads the plain, that, also his,
Seems floating like an aureole round the head
Of far majestic Rome. Beneath our feet
The glinting grey-green olives, like the sea
In north-land summer, dream of Winter dead
And Beauty living ; and among them, sweet,
With violets girdled, nestling tenderly,—
The house, from him of Padua named, we love !
Yet not for him we love it, nor its floor,
That Horace may have trod,—have heard him sing ;—
But for the smiles caught from the blue above,
The greetings at its hospitable door
Where all are welcome-blessed on entering.

AN AUTUMN DAY

THOU wind that, with a roaring like the Sea's,
Raidest the glowing trees
On this dark autumn day,—
Whence comest? Art thou, say,
Some Titan lover toying with the locks
Of thy beloved, all golden? or, are thy shocks
Wild throbs of battle,—the bright leaves, thy Slain,
That from the lawn shall never rise again,—
Nor see no more the Sun ride high in heaven,
Proud of the loveliness his kiss had given?
Wilt thou for ever laugh, or rage, and weep,
Or babble of the secrets of the Deep
To the affrighted boughs, to ruin brought,
That made the Summer beautiful past thought?
They loved thee once! Hast thou no heart for Them?
Must thy shrill triumph be their requiem?
O ruinous victory! Liefer will I hold
Thou art a poet weaving thoughts of old
In magic strophes of an immortal song
Charming from life the sense of human wrong,—
That thy rough blasts which tear the rack above
Are clarions heralding new days of Love,—

AN AUTUMN DAY

That no true heart shall own the throb of pain
When Springtime on the green land falls again,—
Be borne away for aye, each thought that grieves,
In whirled red eddies of the last year's leaves !
But cold recedes not, tho' the skies be blue,
And Sorrow will survive tho' leaves renew.
April, despite her joys for all, must bring
Quick memories of many a vanisht thing.
The scar remains to plead the former pain,
Altho' the wounded heart grows whole again.
Ay, Spring is not, and I but seem to see

Above the wreck of Summer bright, enthralling
Flashes of thundering blades amid the clouds,
And dropping plumes of eagles where they flee ;
And in the torn leaves whirling, crowds on crowds,
Dear golden Autumns falling, falling, falling
Back to the darkness of Eternity.

Natheless, be not deceived, my Soul, nor fear
Because all forms are blurred that nought is clear !
Thou movest among ruins of the Past.
Behold those fragments of a Goddess cast
Under the dripping tangle of dead weeds !
Yet from afar be sure the traveller speeds
To recompose the statue, and declare
The ancient masterwork surpassing fair.
Under an iron mask of steadfast ice
May flow the very streams of Paradise.

AN AUTUMN DAY

So the Earth-spirit, 'neath the Sungod's rule,
Is labouring in the Palace Beautiful,
And fashioning the birthday gifts of Spring,
Regardless of whole eras perishing.
For doth not She for weakness give us might,
And, for mysterious dimness, light ?
The solemn vacancies of Winter still
With glorious miracles of beauty fill ?
And, in this changing, shall not we change, too,
And, presently, the nerves of sight renew ?—
Wherefore, in joy, let us our hearts prepare,
And at the Feast of glory sing her fair.

THE SEA-NYMPH

SWEEPING the strings of her harp,
I heard a sea-nymph sing
While the green waves laughed and leaped
And danced at her feet in a ring.
The sea-gulls hovered around
Through the morning-mist so fair,
And glittering fishes came up
To quaff the enchanted air.
I crept to the rim of the cliffs,
Where sea-pinks nod to the sea,
And the dark rocks gloom below,
To catch what her words might be :
For it seemed a right merry song ;
But she said that each throbbing string
Had once been a sailor bold,
And the master-string—a King !

CLASSIS

(S. APOLLINARIS)

LIKE an old royal Leper reft of friends,
Midway Ravenna and her solemn pines,
On the wide, greedy marsh Death undermines,
Towers a lonely Shrine. The sun descends,
Lending his golden mantle to decay,
And seems to burn along the feverous walls
Giving a throb of life ; tho' Death enthralls
And soon will turn the gold to tristful gray.
Where is the city this Cathedral crowned ?
Where are the Roman fleets men called her by ?
Mute centuries are rising all around,
Rolling across the land a phantom sea ;
And from the awful hush there comes a cry,—
'My God, why thus hast Thou forsaken me ?'



AUTUMN IN THE CAMPAGNA DI ROMA

(TO SIR WILLIAM VERNON-HARCOURT)

A HUNDRED townlets, girt with grain,
Once jewelled-o'er this bounteous plain ;
A thousand armies by these roads
Have tramped to victory with banners flying ;
Ten thousand beautiful abodes
Have watched an Empire growing, dying,
On whose mute, desolated shells,
Where the snake dwells,
And shattered marbles lie
Facing the incomparable sky,—
We turn our softened eyes amazed,
And dare to picture how they raised
Their proud arcades, their gleaming walls,
Their flowering courts, and frescoed halls,
With statues bright ;—what breathing forms,
Far lovelier than those of stone,
Have felt this very sun that warms
Their unsuspecting dust alone,—
Have watched the feet of morning pass
Printing her glories on the grass

AUTUMN IN THE CAMPAGNA DI ROMA

As now, high toward her mid-day throne ;—
Have seen Præneste's mountain kis't
By shades of suppliant amethyst,
And Alba, with her sacred grove,
Triumphant to the throne of Jove,
O'er-sceptering the Latian plain
Spread out below,—a golden main,
With Rome, its isle of glorious light,
Irradiant as the God of Might ;—
Have sighed, have smiled, have loved, have scorned,
And raged and pitied, vowed and mourned,
Then vanished—gone beyond recall,
Emperors and lovers, slaves, ay all,—
In vain ! The lovely land is hushed
That holds that Past within her, crushed.
The breast of Beauty bears a load
Of secrets never to be known,
Albeit by Death she is endowed
With speaking splendour still her own.
The kite that haunts her broken towers,
Foxes, that own each apt recess,
The roses of the wilderness,—
These only know through all the hours
The wonder of her silences. *e'n*
Earth has more grace than Death has ~~ere~~ consumed.
These long-abandoned roads proclaim her powers.
Ages of guilt and glory lie entombed,
And Nature writes their epitaphs in flowers.

TO W. E. H. LECKY

GREAT Son of Light, Thou shew'st us, page by page,
As with a golden finger of the Sun,
What threads, of yore, for Man, the Fates have spun,
The ebb and flow of Age on roaring Age :
What forces 'gainst his Reason did engage,
More cruel far than furious Goth and Hun ;—
What lives and loves destroyed, what realms undone,
By Priestly cunning, arrogance, and rage.
Then drops this uproar to a solemn lull,
And we, like one awaked from some dark dream,
Scarcely believe our freedom, till we cull
From thy requickening words a sovereign balm,
And in our ears thy voice benign doth seem
A silvery clarion ringing thro' the calm.

DIFFERENCES

THE Poet you will e'er misprize ;
No grace he'll find in your grim eyes ;
You sneer because he sees it blue
When the whole world is black to you.
" He garbles every thing that stirs,
" And, crazy, dreams yon gossamers
" He knows mere spider-films to be,
" Are elfin silver argosies
" Afloat upon a golden sea ! "
But other films attract his eyes,—
Less fine of web, tho' glittering, too ;
Yet, murderously stuck with flies ;
And in their centre there is—You !

TO COVENTRY PATMORE (1892)

COME, let us wander where glad thoughts invite,
And while the storm strips golden branches bare,
Dowering poor lanes with jewels of the air,
My Pen, likewise do thou for Man, and write
Him rich in hope ! Say that ambitious care
Endues his arm with ever nobler might,
His doubts with darkness wage unflagging fight,
His vision thrives on all which Truth makes fair ;
That in him strives a worth so excellent
Oft makes his presence like an angel shine,
Or like the Spring, with all the joy thereof,—
Spring, that bedecks with charms each dismal rent
Of storm-struck life, and lights this huge design
Thro' all its labyrinthine turns, with Love.

MERCURY

(TO MISS A. L. BIRD)

It is the night ! Around this mountain-crest,
Whose glittering crags leap down to the dark world
In lines of broken glory, as if hurled
Like passions from the hand of the Supreme,—
The breath of angels moveth ; while the breast
Of all the unclouded heaven with all her stars
Heaves as with Love eternal, to a stream,
Half-mournful and half-ecstasy, of sound,
Of labyrinthine harmony,—whose bars
Of loaded force and sweetness seem to rise
Illimitably from where in peace profound
The far-down world of Life is wrapt in sleep,
Like some great closed-up flower in Paradise.
And, captive to their song, light vapours leap
And float, and sink, and fade away, like dreams,
And form again, like Love. But in the east
The white stars dim ; while soft, and yet more soft,
The sound-stream ebbs away, and gentle beams
Of overpowering Light press up, as to a feast
The golden guests where presently aloft

MERCURY

Enthroned the dazzling bridegroom shall appear,
Whose advent to the starry palaces
They would proclaim. Lo, from the scented hills,
From the dark sandal forests that impress
The zephyrs, and from every liliated mere
Embosomed there, far from all mortal ills,
Wander elysian airs, whose magic might
Transports with irresistible delight
The soul that breathes them.—But my rest is o'er :
My silver-sandal'd feet may stay no more
Till I have known the snowy summits fade
That keep the Indian from the wild Afghan,
And seen Hydaspes, like a shining blade
Swording Assyrian plains, and marked each clan
Of myriad-marbled Caucasus, and Him
Who is the Lord of Ural and of Krim.
Away, away !

✓

NELL' AVVENIRE

My Golden-head, with clustering curls,
My Glory, with the dark-bright eyes,
With teeth, like little river-pearls,
That gleam with laughter, or surprise,—
Your sweet small hands as rays of light
That move at a hint from your sunny heart
In the air of a world as black as night,—
How beautiful!—past the dreams of Art!
What will you do in this World of ours,
Already, of eyes and of hearts, a King,
A very lord, like the Sun in Spring
That smiles and covers the fields with flowers?
What will you do to gladden this Earth,
As you gladden it now,—when the years unfold?
How, Sun, as thou art,—keep the clouds from thy worth?
How, Gold as thou art,—keep the dust from the gold?

FROM PETRARCA

SWEET bird, thou mourn'st the death of the last rose,
The absent beauty of thy tender mate,
And see'st approaching with relentless fate
The reign of darkness and subduing snows.
Familiar, then, with things that joy fore-close,
May-be thou mightest guess my kindred state,
And to my bosom thus disconsolate
Fly ; and by sharing ease its aching woes ?
Yet ill the shares would balance, since thy Dear
May here be living still ; while, wrath with me,
Both Death and Heaven co-equally combine.
Natheless, the season and dark hour agree,
Regretting many a sweet departed year,
To bid me join my bitter plaint with thine.

SONNET

TRUE Wisdom tireth not of common things,
Nay, thence, as from a sweet exhaustless well
She draws a strength divine, with glimmerings
Of Heaven that feed her longing to excel.
She seeth how most high Intelligence,
Loving with equal eye the great and small,
Endows with an unstinted affluence,
The old and new, both rare and usual.
The Soul, as from a God by us unseen,
Borrows her glory ; and can see and hear
Each thing referred thereto in due degree ;
But such untoward cloudings intervene
To cross, obscure, or taint this atmosphere,
Few with ripe-rounded truth dare say they 'See.'

AT PAINSWICK EDGE

As I came through the waist-high corn
Far bells I heard on either side,
And, overhead, the bird of morn
Was showering music far and wide ;
And from the neighbouring woods the croon
Of mothering-doves, in soft refrain,
Across the golden afternoon
Came mingled with the whispering grain.
From distant bell, from leaf, and bird,
More still was I the more I heard ;
And lo another voice,—of Peace,
Came underneath, more sweet than these !

SUNSET

BETWEEN dark stems the low sun streams
(That, like a sluice, let thro' his beams)
And floods the swaying grasses cool,
The lily splendouring the pool,
And burns along the hedge-row, where
White elder-flowers rise tier on tier,
And wild-rose to the glowing west
With store of beauty bares her breast,—
Then shoots across the darkening dale,
(A bridge of light that shades assail,
To where yon beechwoods calmly shine
Like warriors fair, in glorious line.
Around our gables madly tear
Shrill swifts that love the crimsoning air
And wear its favours on their wings.
See, how they sweep, like scythes of fire,
Now down the fields, now round the spire ;
While, near at hand, a throistle sings
Far up amid the fragrant lime,
Beneath whose boughs each gnat that stirs,
Makes prey for nimble fly-catchers.

SUNSET

Hark ! from yon tower now floats a chime,
Like leaves from golden trees of Time,
That tells of summer-hours gone by,
And shades of evening drawing nigh ;
Yet, breathing air so blithe and sweet,
Life knows, but ne'er may feel, defeat.

THE NIGHTINGALE

HARK, how this Lord of night doth sweetly sing,
 Among these moonlit oaks that weave a veil
Of tremulous leaves for-ever whispering
 As the wild airs of evening flow and fail !
These, his blest audience be, that count their years
 By Aprils which his music glorifies,
His most time-honoured loving listeners
 That point each pause with tenderest commentaries.
We, too, subserve his rule thus witching-sweet
 It makes the crimson triumph of the Day
That fired yon hills, seem but a sober feat,—
 That royal Show mere flowers to strew Love's way.
Belike, e'en thus seem Earth's fair pleasures, all,
To those who hear the Voice so still and small !

IN SICILY

THINE Ancient Etna, Lord of many climes,
By hapless ravage wrought, may not compare
With what in vain perversity can dare
The vulgar Vandals of these after-times ;—
But tho' Man stain thee with his darkest crimes
Thou battle-ground of Nations, passing fair,
And mock thy beauty with a crown of care,
Sicilia,—which thy dauntless mien sublims,—
To me thou art a miracle enchanting,
A Load-star to my many way-farings,
Incomparable mistress reimplanting
Pleasure in thought, with hope of lovelier things,
Resembling me to Those who once undaunting
Came as mere corsairs,¹ to remain thy Kings.

¹ The Norman conquerors, under Count Roger de Hauteville.

AT NEMI

(To T. DOUGLAS MURRAY, Esq.)

I

A WONDROUS cup, with glimmering wine
Far in its depth ; with flowers divine,
And sacred leaves around its rim,—
(Green leaves that winter may not dim),
Set in this hush't Olympian hill,
Whose wrath once wreaked its fiery will
On Alba and the Latian plain,
And thundered o'er the Volscian main !—
Such Nemi's lake, where Dian dwells,
In sound of high Genzano's bells !
A still mysterious bath it is,
Of silver, in a lone abyss ;
A field of crystal, tented o'er
With ripples glittering to the shore,
Where bending reeds, like sentinels,
Whisper some zephyr-given word ;
Then stand as they had never stirred.

AT NEMI

II

Sometimes a cloud that o'er it glows
A darkly-threatening beauty throws
Along these crags that frame it round,
As if the Gods on it had frowned ;
Tho' straight, Apollo strives to make
His bright arms lighten round the lake
As he were ta'en with love, and laced
His fingers fair about the waist
Of Cynthia cold, to conquer her.

III

Then all the woodlands 'gin to stir,—
These ilex-woods, austere sweet,
That were, of old, the wild retreat,
Of him, th' inglorious woodland King,
Who paled at passing swallow's wing,
Fear'd each dread hour might bring defeat ;
Knowing a bright long-thirsting blade,
Went somewhere, bared, within the shade,
And that a felon's knife, in turn,
In his own timorous blood must burn.
Nor dared he let his eyelids close
In Summer's heat, or Winter's snows.
No love for man, nor woman, his :
For him no dream of human bliss,—

AT NEMI

But the mere despicable strife
How to prolong his hated life,
And, murderer himself, to be
Fulfiller of an hapless vow,
The Keeper of the sacred tree,
The guardian of the Golden bough.

IV

See, how the nimble shadows race
Above that venerable place
Where Dian's glorious mansion dressed
In garlands gay, with promise blessed
In ancient days the matron throng
That paid with sacrifice and song
Its secret vows : the calm retreat
Whose pavement, worn by female feet,
The Goddess loved ! Her sacred seat
And temple throned above the lake,—
It marked a thousand summers wake
Before it fell to rise no more,
And strewed about yon lonely shore
Those architraves and mouldings fair,
And votive offerings passing rare.

V

And now the mountains fold on fold,
Where faery forests interwreath
To guard this tranced lake beneath,
Are strewn with shields of reddening gold ;

AT NEMI

While far above, in glowing might,
 Tho' wrecked the shrine of Latian Jove,
 Great Alba keeps his holy grove,
But wears it as a crown of light ;
And her descending mantle fills
Each dreamy hollow of the hills
With purple, deepening to her feet.

VI

But lo the day is dead : for, sweet,
As from the lips of some dark rose,
The fragrant breath of evening flows !
With happy hearts, with voices gay,
Forth, till we gain the Appian Way.

NEAR BAVENO

(To J. F. A. B.)

Cool, through a green cleft in some flowering hills
That, Spring-long, in the South salute the sun,
Their bounteous lord, a vestal stream doth run
Broken by rocks into a thousand rills
So that the glen with thunderous murmur thrills
Tumbling from pool to pool and stone to stone.
Twin cliffs with dripping ivy gaze thereon,
And, all between, the tenderest azure fills.
There, on a day when the young vines did burn
Along the noontide knolls, and I would rest,
By rapture of the woodland overcome,—
Out of an emerald bower of yielding fern
The Graces issued, to their bath address.
How the wild waters at the sight grew dumb !

THE PIXIES OF COSCOMBE

I

THIRTEEN hundred and sixty-five !
An evening in June ! And the woods are alive
Twixt Coscombe House and the Abbey of Hayles
With a gathering of elves, as the twilight fails.
For at Oberon's word they all take heed ;
And the tiresome gnat with his tedious reed
Has gone forth as herald with a decree,
Which the bee, too, hums on his deep bassoon,
While the moon-coloured wood-moths caught by the
tune,
Flutter around them impatiently,
And the darkening blue-bells quiver with glee.
The Kinglet close-by hears his orders intoned,
By his favourite fairy, sitting enthroned
On a golden cushion that sheds full well
A pale green light, in an arum-bell ;
While a wood-wail warbles above in the boughs
And the badger approves, with a grunt, to his spouse,
Who, eager for frolic, just dances a turn,
Then rolls in a cool, soft fountain of fern.

THE PIXIES OF COSCOMBE

II

Soon all the steep wood rearouses and stirs
With a fluttering of wings thro' the fragrant firs.
Like the sound of a shower is the whirr of the wings
Of a million elves that are wheeling in rings,
Delighted past measure to think of the sport
Should a threatening cloud of its rain run short.

III

For all are determined to shelter from harm
Fair Alice that lives at Stanway Farm.
No Cotswold maiden so fair is as she :
Could fairer maiden be found elsewhere ?
Her eyes are like the deep violet sea
Where Love swims untired to eternity ;
And Summer is proud that his sweetest air
Should toy with the wealth of that auburn hair.
From foot unto crown a more perfect thing,—
A sun in Winter, a moon in Spring,—
Was never beheld than Alice Gray :
Pope Urban, keep thy monks away !

IV

This morn as she went from Broadway Fair,
A white brother dared to make eyes at her,—
He who now is returning from Coscombe to Hayles
Having supped with his Abbot, on cyder and quails.

THE PIXIES OF COSCOMBE

V

As soon as they notice his peaked white hood
The rabbits run off to be close to their wood :
For it is not so dark, though day be set,
He can make out the tremulous blue-bells yet,
As he enters the wood, and with fingers elate
Merrily latches the lichen'd gate.
The timorous spear-grass sings in her sleep,
And a roosting chaffinch begins to cheep.

VI

And now that he gathers his habit around him
Some casual briars, sure, try to confound him.
He hasteneth his gait ; but, attending a cut,
He presently flounders headlong in a rut ;
Then, ere he can rise, poor brother Hieronym,—
An instant ! the Pixies are out, and upon him.
Queen Mab, too, forewarned by a startled pie,
Comes riding post-haste on a dragon-fly ;
And some fairies that stand upon swaying docks
Tiptoe, come buzzing in eager flocks.
Some climb, unperceived, in the folds of his cowl
Unalarmed by the bristles that crop on his jowl :
And it shows how irreverent Pixies can be ;
For they dance round his tonsure in 'one, two, three.'

THE PIXIES OF COSCOMBE

VII

Now a twinge, as of gout, shot up from his toes,
As a cobweb caught fast on the bridge of his nose,
While a hundred small warriors came sailing afield
On wych-elm seed-cases, each shaped like a shield.
With a spear made of nettle one tickled his crown,
One pestered his lips with dandelion's down :—

All hopping and skipping
And flitting and tripping,
And shifting and sliding,
And leaping and gliding,
Jocund, exulting ;—
No mercy consulting,
But roundly upbraiding
A monk that goes maiding.

VIII

Then he felt at his ankle the nip of a stoat,
And, leaping, roared 'mercy !' for very pain ;
Though a trick of the 'Interdict' stuck in his
throat,
And died in the gulp of a fear profane.
"By holy Saint Bernard,—now give me release !
O mercy, sweet elves, ay, in God's name, 'peace !' "

THE PIXIES OF COSCOMBE

IX

For their din had become too appalling for ears,
And he yelled out with torment half-maddened with fears,
As he fled thro' the tempest of Elf-land laughter,
Full-fearful of things he thought following after,—
(As though the black Demon was hurrying behind him,
Or the gargoyles of Didbrook were trying to tind him,)
Till anon the old Abbey stood softly revealed,
Pearl-gray, quite at peace, in its flowering field.

X

Right thankful was he, though more dead than alive,
To clutch at the Farmery gate, and revive.

XI

'Twas noticed he grew more a saint than knave ;
Went less from his cloister ; became like its slave.
Some said he had seen great Saint Bernard himself—
None deemed it mere trick of a mischievous elf.
Good and evil work cures that are equally strange,
And often they both claim the marvellous change.
Nay, both may be right, if not misunderstood :—
What matter the means, if the change is for Good ?
But his brother monks thought it a wonderful thing
That his tonsure grew just like a fairy-ring !

SONNET

WHAT vailleth now to dedicate my strains
To charms that have untimely ceased to be ?
For none His voice may hear, whose melody
Was felt, like happiness, within the veins,
And knowing his worth, approve my tender pains.
How fair soe'er, he's but a memory,
For those who saw him ; tho' not so to me,
To whom, life-long, unfading he remains.
Some other scene enjoys him where may glow
Increased that glory, it was his to wear
When softly passing thro' this shadowed grove ;
May-be he leads the friends we envied so !
This thought it is which maketh Death so dear ;
And yet the same fills Life itself with Love.



A CHRYSALIS

POOR trammled Worm, we needs would dub
Thee,—brown, defenceless, wriggling Grub,—
Seeming of Nature's underlings,
Knew we not thou dost rival kings !

For, seen more near, behold it shows
Weird outlined wings enfolded close
That, long ere summer, will it bear
Thro' bright dominions of the air,
A flying iris fleckt with gold,
A faery sultan uncontrolled ;
Beloved, from where the morning springs
To where Night folds her balmy wings.

And under these dark prisoning scales,
Even as our flesh the Spirit veils,
Innumerable resplendent eyes
Wait eager to thrust off disguise,
And feelers that like fairies' brooms
Will sweep the flower-dust from its plumes,

A CHRYSALIS

And tendril-like mysterious tongue
To find the honied heart that's hung
Till then an ineffectual dower
Within some downy virgin flower.

May-be, thro' night-like long delay,
Thou half-divin'st thy coming day,
That when thou movest, softly strains
The hindered gladness in thy veins,
The imperious need for wandering free,
Th' illimitable 'to-be,'—
Thou hear'st a voice we cannot hear,
Declaring the victorious year
His green battalions doth advance
For thy, for our, deliverance ;—
That, in sweet council now have met
The lily-queen, the violet,
The herald-primrose, azure squill,
The all-adventurous daffodil,
The celandine in glistening mail,
And daisies white that never fail ;—
That destiny upon them shines
And triumph waits on their designs.

Ah, Who, to tell,—would be so bold,
What tale of Love thou might'st unfold,
Poor, shuffling, passive Chrysalis,
Thus far restrained from natural bliss !—

A CHRYSALIS

Or, how thy wings are being prepared
For heavenly records undeclared,
In glorious dyes of rare expense,
Fair briefs of God's magnificence ?

We only know Our thoughts revolve
Round mysteries we cannot solve ;
So, being too witless to translate
The wonders of thy present state,
How might we fare with future things ?
Or hope to read on thy wild wings,
Through palimpsests indited there,
The hidden gospels of the air ?

All we may do, is watch and ward,
Not quicken Nature, nor retard ;
But let Her work at wonted pace
In this dumb frail mysterious case,
Remembering he who hurts this mask
Obstructs Her in the wondrous task,
And one mere touch too hard, I wis,
May spoil for ever, that, or this !—
Until in some predestined dawn,
Veil after veil of dark withdrawn,
A radiant guest to Heaven's high feast,
The glowing Moth shall be released,
And all the hope with which it thrilled,
Its every dream of joy,—fulfilled ?

IN NATAL

I

GREEN forests are singing
Dark hymns for our Heroes :
Wan heather is whisp'ring
The tale of their valour
From mound unto hollow.
High caverns are listening
Along the bare ridges
Of crimsoning mountains.
The valley returneth
An anthem of glory.—
Peace to the fallen !

II

The young beams that waken
The woodlands to-morrow
Will glow on the silent
Rude mound of their glory,—
May fight with the flying
Grim shadows of Autumn.
The dark winds of Winter

IN NATAL

May roar round their dwelling ;—
But they shall be sleeping,
Sleeping,—ay, sleeping ;
Far, far from our sorrow,
Like seeds of white lilies
Waiting the Sunshine !

TO COMMENDATORE
GIACOMO BONI
NIGER LAPIS

I

HEAVEN smiles, as when Gods had their home
In incommensurable Rome.
Red poppies wave and zephyrs play
Under the soft Italian Day
That, king-like, fills this glorious throne
That, once, did lord the world, alone,—
That shed the light which never dies
Through portals of the centuries
On our forefathers in the West,
By darkness and defeat opprest,
Whose heirs we are, from overseas,
And proud in sooth to be of these.

II

What, then, art Thou, grim blotted page,—
Dread Abstract of a distant Age,—
Spot of eternal shade?—We trow,
Thou art, of a great People's woe,

NIGER LAPIS

The seal : made visible as night,
A tragic gem brought back to light,
Our Wonder !—long since set this-wise
What time did, like Love's Goddess, rise
Rome, from the wild barbarian wave,
And made the shore, that is her grave,
Battling for life ! Their grief compressed,
Inviolatè, see, within her breast,
Where they have poured in precious things
With ashes of burnt-offerings
To cover each unholy rent
In their great Founder's monument,
Then hidden it with a marble pall,
A mourning veil spread over all !

III

We, then, who voice a later Age,
Must make our humble pilgrimage
To the Black Stone : for us, not night,
But inextinguishable Light,
A flag of strength o'er Time unfurled
By Rome for us,—for all the world ;
And strive to guess how may have been
Of old that great unlangued scene,
When first, with gold and gluttèd sword,
Had fled the Gaul's victorious horde,
Leaving this plundered city, prone,
Her altars to the Gods o'er-thrown,

NIGER LAPIS

Her fairest fanes defiled and burned,—
Then, how her folk once more returned,
Brave hearts that waxed not faint, untrue ;
But, treading under-foot Despair,
Regave her to the War-God's care,
And reared their ravaged homes anew.

IV

For ever shine, thou Sun, full fain
On Men like those, made wise by pain,
Who, when the west is dark with rain
Turn to the east for light again,
Knowing much hope is left them still ;
The Curse,—with those that wrought them ill !

SIENA, IN SPRING

(TO MISS ELIZA WEDGWOOD)

I

ABOVE the lovely broken land
A cloud of silver breathes and dreams
Embattled round with golden beams,—
The fingers of Apollo's hand ;
And from the dark Italian trees
A'glittering after heavenly showers,
Siena, to the fragrant breeze
Uplifts her diadem of towers,—
Unfolds her beauty shining, fair
With treasures flattering the wild air :
Up-lighting with triumphant glow
The vine-clad vales that lean below ;
So that above her gardens green
To Amiato swelling steep
She smiles, like Love's illustrious Queen,
Across the glad waves of the deep.
A thousand birds their notes unite
To symphony the Spring's delight,—

SIENA, IN SPRING

A thousand blossoms now unfold
To girdle her with white and gold :
While She from her calm throne above
In overwhelming splendour dight
Surveys the festival of Love.

II

Siena thrives in triumph sweet
Unheeding victory or defeat ;
For all her olden feuds are healed.
Monteaperto's murderous field,
That awful day of doubts and fears,
Of clashing swords and whistling spears,
When Florence vainly her withstood,
And Arbia crimson ran with blood,—
With its wild clamour to the sky
Has faded from her memory.
She even forgets her yearlong teen,
Sly Cosimo's revenge obscene,
When forth her portals day by day
The useless mouths were driven away,—
How on her walls, to ruin brought,
Her desperate maids and matrons fought ;—
How even that sight could not assuage
The butcher Medeghino's rage.
Yet holds most fresh and sweet the fame
Of one pale face, one wasted frame,

SIENA, IN SPRING

Auspicious to the sons of men,—
That showered into the darkest den
Of lust and sloth, or broken vows,
The light of the celestial Spouse ;
So that at every turn one greets
Among her venerable streets
Saint Catharine's name, more fair and dear
Than all the saints of the whole year
To her,—or, than all names enrolled
In her proud ancient Book of Gold.

CAPTIVE EAGLES

(To WILLIAM E. DARWIN, ESQ.)

THERE is a Voice, in beauty like to none,
A sound the spaces never weary of,
That spake : and straightway power to us was given
To poise o'er burnish't clouds, Earth far above,
And cleave the interspace 'twixt sun and sun,
Lords of the azure liberties of Heaven.
But Ye, the great, inglorious, unfair,
Have trapped us in our homes with net and snare,
And caged us in with what is worse than bars
This murky Desolation's bitter air,
Through which the flash of neither sun nor stars
May reach our royal eyes that on the gaze
Of Jove and bright Apollo, in their might,
Have feasted, age on age ! We held the ways
With our broad vans that win the thrones of Light,
And drank the dew from rocky bowls of gold
On sacred mountains, at whose feet are rolled
The loveliest billows that great Neptune sways.
And lo, ye offer carrion torn from swine
To fine the edge of appetites divine ;

CAPTIVE EAGLES

And, for the glory of Olympian air,
Dire fog-drift from the death-pools of Despair,
Whose deadly skill compels our quivering plumes
To counterfeit the dark pernicious fumes
Which rise when gloomy Hecate rules a' nights,
And some fell hag at her unhallow'd rites,
Hopping around her pool of horrors, falls,
Cindered by Jove's quick flash, that shakes the walls
Of earthly cities. Here must we live and die,—
If that be Life, when Torment cries—enough !
When all is gone life had to hold us by,—
Discrowned, enthralled, waiting for Death put-off !

TO A CERTAIN ROSE

SWEET Thrall, despair not, tho' the untimely frost
Hath lightly held thee in his silvery chains,
Nor droop thine head as were thy treasure lost
That cost long bitter spells of patient pains !
Patience, being god-like, reapeth heavenly gains,
And thy Deliverer counteth all the cost.

II

We knew the clear Night's keen ten thousand eyes
Glittering with envy seemed to say—"Thou Fool !
Humble thy pride ! These buds be Winter's prize
Clutched from too-eager Summer's rich misrule.
My stars are witnesses that thou mayest school
To plead for thee if this dissatisfies !"

III

Forthwith She turned the air to walls of steel
Unmeet for tender Beauty : yet the cold
Shirking his task, undid her deadly zeal.
Wherefore, let thy fair hope in thee be bold :
For, in thy lap shall July lay his gold,
And August thy full loveliness reveal.

TO A CERTAIN ROSE

IV

Lift up ! Thy crimson favour keeps the doors
Of His far eastern palace who prepares
Thy dear deliverance. Through all thy pores
Let honied hope distil : for hither fares,
Whose breath hath wit to conquer all thy cares,
The God of Light ; whose love each hurt restores,

V

Whose gold brought never sorrow to this Earth !
And lo ! the sultan bee, whose rash excess
Might rob thy rich exchequer of its worth,
Hath missed thee in his wanton giddiness !
Hark, how the birds do sing, how leaves caress,
As consecrating morning with their mirth !

VI

O sweet, my Rose, thy breath is like the scent
That travels on the soft Arabian wind !
In thee the Sun hath now his chief content
Spending his richest beams, to joy resigned.
Forget the jealous frost, the Night unkind :
Failure is Envy's perfect punishment !

HAYLES ABBEY (1246-1900)

(TO THE REV. WILLIAM BAZELEY, M.A.)

SAINT Mary's field,—the singing field of Hayles,
Wherethrough soft breaths of woodland in the Spring
Roam pilgrim-like, blessing the gentle gales,—
A paradise of wild flowers whispering,
Sun-litten, humble, at the glorious feet
Of the green hills ! There, in the midst thereof,
Some ivied arches make a prison meet
Where silence and the season filled with love,
Blush mutual satisfaction in the rose.

This is the field of Hayles that once did hold
Uprising pearl-gray from its emerald close,
Her long-roofed Abbey, topped with vane of gold
On the low tower—that once rang out so sweet
Its happy cadence to the pulsing air
With a brave chime of bells that seemed to cheat
In praise and love the pains of Age and Care,—
And made the team in the far furrows pause
To catch their full soft message as it sang
Above the clamour of the fluttering daws.
Ay, grandly from the mead this Abbey sprang,

HAYLES ABBEY

A forest of proud pillars, made thus fair
That She might live in it whose love alone,
Pledged by a princely vow, had raised it there ;
A marvel rare,—a miracle of stone :
And, serving it,—(even as at rise of sun
Unnumbered little floating clouds of white
To us beneath, ere day hath well begun,
Reflect their fount of joy, his unseen light,)
The white monks glided to their carven choir,
And while the wreathing incense o'er it soared
Drifting among the shafts of golden fire,
With cheerful hearts they blessed their risen Lord.
Grey companies of pilgrims might you see
Threading the steep hill-side till yon green wood
Received and gave them back felicity,
Singing Saint Mary and the 'Holy Blood ;'
Or, river-like, thin lines of flashing steel,—
Blithe bands of noble knights and ladies fair,
'Neath banners bearing Stafford's flaming wheel,
Or, golden, with the chevrons of De Clare,
Advancing with the May-winds thro' the lanes
From towered Sudeley with its yellow walls,
Where Chandos ruled, a lord of proud domains,—
Or, Toddington, where Tracy filled his halls ;—
Or gailier yet, from Gloucester, over Cleeve,
Outbright'ning the June dawn with all its dew,—
Broad standards of the King one might perceive,
Glittering with lovely lilies of Anjou.

HAYLES ABBEY

Ay, all these things were fair ; and fairer still
Knew Hayles till her clear skies grew sick with change,
And she looked forth to each beloved hill
Happy, yet with forebodings dim and strange.
For, lo ! hard days and harsh on England rose,
Thick-sown with sorrows, dark with bitter gloom
For all things fair, though fair as her own snows !
On Thee, too, fell the straitening shadow of doom,
Than whom the Tyrant found no daintier prize
Wherefrom to filch new jewels for his crown.
For, though the Lord of Light had bidden thee rise,
The Adulterous Lord of Wrath now bowed thee down ;
And on Thy beauty, from the blue above,
It seemed, the wet weight of his murderous knife
Fell like a ruining blast, nor might the love
Of all thy Lovers serve to save thy life.

Then, sank thy strong-ribbed arches, wrought so fair.
Men tore the very screen that veiled their Lord,
Whose Love divine,—had it not thriven there
And blossomed, like the daisies on thy sward ?
They cracked thy traceries rare ; to worse than night
The image of the Virgin down they threw ;
And His disciples, crowned with golden light,
In the great window slaughtered they anew.
All this, and worse, they wreaked on thee, sweet Hayles,
Whose breath went forth beneath a despot's rod.

HAYLES ABBEY

But though thy harvest felt his fiery flails
And yielded,—what is left belongs to God.
Wherefore this field that gives thy ruin grace
Owns a diviner Summer than we know,
Wearing the radiance of some heavenly face
That thrills our spirit's vision with its glow,
Albeit we know on Earth's subservient shores
Nigh twice two hundred waves of Time's dark breath
Have thundered, since went whispering thro' thy doors
The word of Dissolution, winged with Death.

THE RUINED COTTAGE

I

A RUINED cot beside the lane,
Abandoned to the wind and rain !
Comfort once clothed those walls so bare,
That now but entertain the air !
What friends there greeted ! Journeys done,
Opened their soul's leaves to the sun
Of Memory, and gave old tales
Of folk long gone from Cotswold vales,—
With tidings fair from distant climes,
Or customs of the good old times,
And filling oft the kindly brier,—
Passed many an evening by the fire !—

II

The white owl hoots above at night
The stone-tiled roof half-fallen in.
Beneath those eaves have swallows been
House-holders, too, that brought delight
Year after year, and saw below
The little children come and go
That, somewhere, may be old and white.

THE RUINED COTTAGE

III

Lo, in the garden underneath,
In spite of Time's devouring teeth,
The same old flowers go battling on
 Unhelped against the venom'd weeds ;—
The lilac sweet, that blooms for none
 To see : the balsam scattering seeds,
That Dick would get the girls to pinch ;
(He kissed the lass that didn't flinch) ;—
 The wildering box that once was trim
 And bore a mimic peacock prim.
The Yew and Elder intergrown,
(Like nests from whence the birds have flown)
 Have lost all form ; yet heretofore
 Did bloom for eyes that smile no more :
For, dusty nettles line the wall,
 And creepers to the windows cleave,
 And everywhere the spiders weave ;
And mandrake soon will smother all.



NIGHT AND SLEEP

My mother is the Night, whose dewy breath
From lips like petals of a dark sweet rose,
Doth softly draw the soul from whom they touch,
And hushes all the dissonance of Day.
And She is diademed with golden stars,
Be-winged with mighty plumes as dark as Death's
And perfumed with the East.—But I am Sleep,
A Spirit of delight, beloved of all.
I kiss my way into the willing veins
Subtly as love, spreading oblivion there,
Drugging the conscious sentinels that guard
Life's treasured secrets ; making them confess
(As flowers unfold in Spring) their precious hoards,
Yet know not what they've done. The Poet's thought,
The Warrior's plan, the Statesman's policy,
The Merchant's cares, the all and sundry hopes
Of people, high and low, tho' lock'd away
Where prayers might never find them,—own my rule.
And, more than all of these, I have the trust
Of all sweet sorrows,—of all tender joys
That spread love's blossom in each maiden's heart

NIGHT AND SLEEP

Into a rose in splendour that perfumes,
Breathes heaven upon,—the grossness of this World,
And from whose petals angels frame the word
Our children read within their mothers' eyes,—
Which is the message of unending Love.
These all are mine ; none, none resent my sway.



DAS EWIG WEIBLICHE.

I AM Eternal Queen : not three, but One :
ARTEMIS, ISIS, MARY. In my praise
The ancient altar smoked ; my glorious lays
Resounded in each household ; but, anon,
A grim and sexless TRINE in union
Usurped our realm and all our shrines did raze ;
Who cleped the Feminine of all things, base,
And, with their frownings darkened out the Sun.
Unhappy Man, widowed of comfort thus,
Face to his face his awful judges found
Foredooming him,—less pitying than the sea.
This could not last ; and even at Ephesus,¹
Sacred to me so long, I was recrowned
As MARY ; and behold, the Creed is ME !

¹ A.D. 431.

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